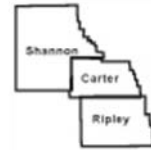




Missouri Department of Conservation Projects, Issues and Programs in Shannon, Carter and Ripley Counties



Current Conversations

Special Points of Interest

**MDC Timber Man-
agement Practices**

Pine in the Bottoms?

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Missouri Department of Conservation Timber Management Practices

Gary Gognat Resource Forester

The Missouri Department of Conservation manages almost 138,000 acres in Shannon County in five conservation areas: Angeline, Current River, Rocky Creek, Peck Ranch, and Sunklands. The Forestry Division’s mission is “*To protect and manage the forests of the state for long-term resource health and sustainability, and for the use and enjoyment of the people*”. Integral to the Division’s mission is management of forest resources. This renewable resource contributes to the local economy by providing jobs, wood products, wildlife viewing and hunting opportunities. Active forest management insures that the forested natural communities of the Ozarks will be healthy and continue to provide the benefits we enjoy today into the future.

Even age and uneven age management are the two type of active forest management used on Shannon County conservation areas. Two inactive forest management designations used include no management or “leave” areas, which receive no treatment during the current rotation, and old growth, which are left to provide established forest cover. The two types of active forest management are described below.

Even-age management – Even-age forest management (EAM) involves growing and tending a group of trees that are all the same age. An even-age forest is usually created with a regeneration harvest where most of the trees are cut in a given area. This allows

the new forest to develop from stump and root sprouts within a small time frame of origination.



An even age shortleaf pine stand with average diameter of 10 inches at breast height after timber improvement thinning.

Even-age management is the most efficient method to grow oak and hickory because they are sun-loving species and grow best with full exposure to sunlight. Individual tree growth is maximized in these conditions. Even-age management is important to establish shortleaf pine also because pine thrives in full sunlight.

Even-age management involves periodic intermediate thinning treatments to maintain optimal growing conditions and prevent trees from being overcrowded. Intermediate harvests will reduce stocking by approximately one-third of the number of trees in a stand at a given time. Trees left should fully occupy the site, but not to the point where any growing space is not utilized,

somewhere around 60% stocking. Depending upon beginning stocking levels and quality of trees, most of today's forests may be able to support two, but rarely three, intermediate harvests before the need to be regenerated.

Even age management, or clear cutting, is not appropriate everywhere or in every condition. The decision to use even age management is only made after a detailed inventory and examination of conditions. This management is used in stands where most of the trees have reached maturity or are over mature and are starting to decline. Even age management is important as it provides important early-succession wildlife habitat not found in other management types.

Uneven-age Management – Forests managed using uneven-age management (UAM) have three or more age groups present throughout the stand, a continuous stocking of trees over time, and will produce forest products during each entry over time. Uneven-age marking is used to create groups or gaps throughout the stand where a new age group of trees will develop.

The UAM system, with its continuous forest stocking, preserves aesthetic qualities but still allows for harvest of forest products. This style of management also creates a more favorable species composition and structure suitable to each particular site.

Uneven-age management allows marking and harvest of trees as small as six inches diameter at breast height throughout the stand

to improve the quality of the forest. This practice is described as timber stand improvement and is used to manipulate age classes within the stand at each entry. Marking and harvest in all diameter classes adjusts size classes and gives the remaining trees the potential to grow into large diameter, healthy sawtimber size trees. Harvest activities emulate natural disturbances, create regeneration, and create woody debris on the forest floor for insects, amphibians and reptiles.

Proper use of uneven-age management results in improved growth and quality of residual trees in all diameter classes. It will also maintain and improve a healthy species mix of acceptable growing stock, including shortleaf pine, post oak, and white oak. Uneven-age management can be used in areas where species composition and structure allow and where a continual stocking of trees is desired.

If you want to learn more about the forest management practices used on Missouri Department of Conservation public lands, please feel free to contact Gary Gognat, Mike Bill, Terry Thompson, or Clint Dalbom for more information. The Eminence Missouri Department of Conservation phone number is 573-226-3616. Onsite tours and conservation area field days are also scheduled and available throughout the year. Feel free to sign up to get a hands on look at forest resource management on your lands.

PRIVATE LANDS

Pine in the Bottoms?

Mike Gaskins

Private Land Conservationist

February through April is tree planting season. I have prepared a number of tree planting plans for this spring season. When preparing to plant trees focus on good site preparation, proper planting technique and proper species selection for a site to insure planting success. Among these, selection of a species appropriate for a site can do much to assure your trees survive and flourish.

A fair number of the tree planting plans I have been working on are in upland drainages along a dry or wet weather creek bank. When reading common literature about planting trees in riparian zones along a creek, most talk about planting bottomland hardwoods such as walnut, shumard oak, and green ash. In most cases these species work wonderfully in southeast Missouri, southern Ripley County, or where local soil types permit. But, some tree planting plans have been implemented and have failed miserably because the planner failed to match the tree species to the site or soil type and condition. Unlike deep, fertile, loamy creek bottom soils found in many other parts of the world, a fair number

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of Ozark creek bottoms are rocky, dry, and quite poor in the rooting zone for trees.

My supervisor is a wealth of historical knowledge, particularly in the area of Ozark forestry and culture. He once shared with me that, years ago, he had interviewed an older gentleman in northern Carter County about his life. The gentleman explained that back in the 1920's, he and his family had girdled all the virgin pine in his bottom by the creek to sell to the big mill in Grandin, Missouri so that he could get a head start on a corn crop that year. This explained some puzzling observations I had of scattered large pine trees and pine knots while walking open and wooded bottoms in Shannon and Carter County. So, if shortleaf pine was growing on these sites before they were converted to crop fields and pastures, then planting them back to native pine would naturally be a wise choice when planting trees in these Ozark riparian bottoms.

Typically we think of the classic shortleaf pine growing on a tall ridge or a south facing slope, but evidence and history shows that they once were common in the dry upland drainages before many were converted to other uses considered necessary to make a living at that time. If you are considering planting trees on your property as part of a stream bank protection and riparian zone project, or you just want more trees on your property, your local forester or private land conservationist can help determine which trees are right for your project. Who knows, maybe pine will be the right choice for you.

PROTECTION

Brad Hadley

Conservation Agent

Free-ranging hogs were once common in the Ozarks. At the turn of the century, many small farms dotted the Ozark country side and practically all of them had a few hogs – they just didn't bother to "keep them up". Instead, hogs were marked in some way, such as with ear notches, to show ownership. In the late fall, some hogs would be caught and fattened up to be butchered. Meat would be salt-, sugar-, and/or smoke cured and would become a staple for the farmer's family during the winter months.

The "open range" aspect of country living eventually changed and, over time, and escaped hogs were killed or died. Today there is no open range in Missouri and there shouldn't be any free-ranging hogs around.

"Shouldn't be" obviously doesn't mean there isn't and, in fact, there are occasional reports of "domestic" hogs loose in the countryside. Therein is a potential catastrophe. Domestic hogs that "go wild" are known as feral hogs and feral hogs can be very devastating to the Ozark landscape.

Hogs spend much time rooting and wallowing. Naturally, it is easier to root where the soil is moist and moist soil also is where wallowing occurs. Rooting disturbs the soil and contributes to soil erosion and wallowing can actually compact the soil. These two hog activities decrease the soil's absorptive qualities and also increase soil erosion. In our part of the world we have many springs, seeps, fens, and sinkhole

Feral Hogs

ponds. These unique features are the home to numerous threatened or endangered species such as the Hines' emerald dragonfly, showy lady slipper orchid, and the wood frog. These wetland features also provide habitat, food, and cover for many common wildlife species. When hogs damage sensitive wetland areas, they severely jeopardize the survival of both rare and common plant and wildlife species. By the same token, if feral hogs take a liking to the roots of the clover in your hay field, rest assured driving your farm equipment across it will become a very bumpy undertaking.

Feral hogs compete with wildlife for many food sources and, in some cases, wildlife itself becomes a food source for the hogs. Hogs sometimes eat young wildlife or eggs of ground nesting birds such as quail and turkey. Hogs love acorns as do deer and turkey.

Feral hogs also have the potential to carry diseases that may cross into other domestic stock or wildlife. Examples include swine brucellosis, pseudo-rabies, trichinosis and leptospirosis.

Several laws have been enacted by the state of Missouri in recognition of the fact that establishment of feral hogs could have major negative environmental consequences. Any landowner may kill hogs on his own land, and not be liable to the hog's owner, if those hogs are not sufficiently marked to identify them

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as property of another. With consent of the landowner, any person may kill feral hogs on public or private land throughout the year--exceptions are dictated by the Wildlife Code (deer and turkey seasons). Any person knowingly releasing hogs on public or private land may be punished by up to \$1000 and one year in jail.

The Missouri Department of Conservation encourages you to report to the area manager any hog sightings on department land. You are also invited to kill any such hogs you may encounter – just follow safe practices and legal hunting methods to do so. Report any hogs so taken to the area manager or local conservation agent. For more information on feral hogs go to <http://www.mdc.mo.gov/landown/wild/nuisance/hogs/>



FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Beat the Heat...and the Crowds

Dave Woods

Fisheries Management Biologist

Well, at long last, summer is finally here. It seemed like winter would never let go of it's cold grip on the Ozarks, but the ground has thawed, the rivers have warmed up, and it's time to reward yourselves for all the wood splitting and stove stoking you did for the past six months. It seems to me that the best reward in the Ozarks, under the hot summer sun, is to grab your fishing poles and get on the water. The only problem is that everyone in the state has the same idea. The Ozark National Scenic Riverways is one of the most popular floating destinations in Missouri, and for good reason. So how do you find some therapeutic solitude and peaceful fishing on the Jack's Fork and Current Rivers during the summer months? The answer is gravel bar camping.

It seems that fish never bite on a crowded river, or you just can make it to the good habitat. Camping on a gravel bar is one of the best ways to avoid the heavy floating traffic on Ozark streams in the summer time, especially the Jack's Fork and Current Rivers. In addition, at a time when Park Service campsites are swelling with tourist activity, gravel bar camping provides a real sense of wilderness and seclusion that you just can't get in the campsites.

Here are some tips that will make your overnight fishing trip on the river one to enjoy.

First, time your departure in the afternoon, an hour or two after the local outfitters stop launching canoeists. This will put you well behind the large crowds and give you plenty of time to hit some good fishing habitat before you set up camp. Try and find a camp site on the inside bend of a bluff pool. Deep, rocky bluff pools will be the best place to find smallmouth during the hot days of summer, and after you set up camp, you can paddle back upstream in the slow moving water and fish the pool as many times as you want before sundown. It is also a good idea to pick a campsite more than halfway from your takeout point. This will put you well ahead of the next day's crowd and give you plenty of time to fish in the morning before they all come down river. Just be ready for a peaceful, quality angling experience that you will only get when you're camping on a gravel bar.

There are some essential items that you will want to bring that will make you gravel bar camping a comfortable experience. Make sure you have a foam pad or air mattress and a camp chair. Rocks

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aren't the most comfortable to sit or sleep on. Also make sure you have a flashlight or headlamp, some matches or a lighter, and some fire starting material. A campfire is a "must have" while sleeping on the river. Some folks like to pack light and eat hotdogs on a stick and baked beans out of the can. That may be fine for some people, but I would recommend bringing a camp stove, skillet, some oil, and some seasoning. You may just get into some Goggle-eye, and they'll make for a delicious dinner right on the gravel bar. Make sure you bring a back-up dinner just in case the fishing is slow. Another essential item while camping on a gravel bar is some dry bags. It just takes one rouge rock or an off balance moment to make your whole trip miserable, so make sure you pack your important items such as food, sleeping bags, matches, and dry clothes in waterproof dry bags. And never forget the trash bags. When you leave the gravel bar in the morning, be sure to take all of your trash and cover your fire pit with gravel. This way, the next person searching for a little piece of the wilderness will be able to find it just as you did.

Relax, take your time on your trip, and hit the good habitat on your way downstream. There are no worries when you are the only boat on the river. Catch an eddy below a riffle and swirl around fishing for small-mouth. Throw small crank baits around root wads to catch some goggle-eye or long ear sunfish. Or cast a stand-up jig with a skirted grub amongst the boulders in bluff pools and hook into a lunker bronze-back. And don't forget to take in the beautiful scenery while floating down the crystal clear, spring fed streams of the Ozarks. Camping on the river will give you that sought after feeling of solitude, provide better fishing opportunities, and leave you with a feeling of true connection with the outdoors.

Wildlife

"We Looked and the Mother Was Gone"

Justin Gailey

Wildlife Management Biologist

This time of year folks start finding baby deer around their yards and in fields. Conservation staff often receive hundreds of phone calls around the concerning fawns that individuals have found. Most people call because they are concerned about the safety of these young animals. Unfortunately, in some instances, the person picks up the baby deer and takes it home because they think the baby has been abandoned by its mother. Actually, this "abandonment" is a safety feature for the fawn.

In Missouri, peak fawning takes place in late May and June and begins when pregnant does isolate themselves and drive other deer from their fawning areas. Adult deer use the same fawning areas each year. These established fawning areas are thought to limit social stress and to help distribute populations evenly. During the first weeks of life, fawns are very vulnerable to a variety of predators. A fawn can usually stand and nurse within 30 minutes of birth, however they spend the majority of their time bedded in thick cover hay fields, pastures, or old fields. Studies show that fawns are active less than one-fifth of a 24 hour day. Both the doe and the fawn spend most of their time in a 10-20 acre area for the first weeks.

Does only visit their offspring two to four times a day to groom and

allow the fawn to nurse. Fawns move to a new bed site after each feeding and grooming session,



but siblings usually do not bed together. It is often during this period that people find what they believe are "abandoned" fawns. Actually the mother is probably very close by and the fawns should be left alone. I realize that these fawns are very cute and you have to fight the urge to take these little babies home, but people can not provide what these fawns need. Not only do the fawns need to learn and develop wild instincts, the milk the doe provides gives the fawn the right amount of nourishment and builds antibodies that people can not provide with another animals milk or a milk replacer.

Often times people find other "abandoned" wildlife and these babies should also be left alone. It is important to know that these are wild animals and it is better to leave them in the wild.

Outreach & Education

Twin Pines Accessible for Everyone

Skyler Bockman

Education Specialist

The advent of spring brings about a flurry of activity in the natural world. Bird song fills the morning air, plants send up new shoots, animals begin their mating season in earnest, and tree frogs fill the air with a nighttime chorus. Spring is undoubtedly a busy time, both in nature and in the Department of Conservation. A great example of this is the Twin Pines Conservation Education Center, located just east of Winona, Missouri along the highway 60 corridor. In addition to hosting an annual "Heritage Day" event in April, the center has been working to utilize a recently awarded National Wild Turkey Federation grant from Wheelin' Sportsman.

Wheelin' Sportsman grants help fund projects that will make the outdoors more accessible to men and women with disabilities. Twin Pines received more than \$3,500 from the program to build a wheelchair-accessible sidewalk at the facility, enabling more individuals access to the archery range. The entire project was completed in partnership with Wheelin' Sportsman NWTF, the Missouri Department of Conservation, and the Missouri Conservation Heritage Association.

The improvements funded by the NWTF and the Missouri Conservation Heritage Association will allow us to offer more opportunities to our visitors," said Melanie Carden-Jessen, Twin Pines Education Center manager. "We're

proud to make this area more accessible for everyone."

Wheelin' Sportsman NWTF is an outreach program of the National Wild Turkey Federation. The organization helps create outdoor opportunities for men and women with disabilities by hosting events in areas across the nation. Their events are great ways for people to reconnect with the outdoors and learn alternative ways to enjoy outdoor pastimes such as shooting, fishing, hunting, and archery. The possibilities are almost endless as to what the NWTF's Wheelin' Sportsman program can do to expand the opportunities for disabled individuals interested in the outdoors and who want to achieve an active lifestyle.

"Getting people involved and helping them discover a new hobby, or rediscover something they loved to do before an injury is really rewarding" says Illana Burkhart, Wheelin' Sportsman NWTF program coordinator.

Along with the addition of the new sidewalk, Twin Pines has added a new Kevlar "Arrow Catch" curtain behind the archery range's targets to help capture stray arrows that have missed their mark. Novice archers can now practice and hone their skills without fear of missing their targets and losing their arrows. No bow? Not a problem! We have a variety of

youth bows available for loan at the facility. It's a great way to spend some quality time with family and friends, connecting with the outdoors, and as always, at no cost!

Take a few hours off from mowing grass and doing yard work to come by the Twin Pines facility and enjoy our newly accessible archery range, walk the trails, and experience all we have to offer. Let spring unfold before your eyes. If it seems like no one is home, don't worry. The archery range and other outdoor venues are free and open to the public at any time.

Hadley Named Conservation Agent of the Year

Missouri Department of Conservation Protection Regional Supervisor, Gary Cravens has announced that Shannon County Conservation Agent, Brad Hadley, has been selected as Missouri's Conservation Agent of the Year for 2008. Agent Hadley was presented the award recently at a state-wide Protection Division conference.

Hadley was selected based upon

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his resource law enforcement, an effective balance of program responsibilities, job knowledge, work habits, creativity, initiative teamwork and cooperation with other Department employees, interaction with the public, partnerships developed with other county, state, and federal agencies, and his overall well balanced work program.

Since beginning his career as a Missouri Conservation Agent in 1999, Agent Hadley has been assigned to Shannon County. Over the past years he developed a tremendous program of wildlife law enforcement and public relations. He concentrates his efforts in Shannon County, but also devotes considerable time working in other

areas of the state. Agent Hadley is a dedicated professional who exemplifies the very best attributes of all areas of responsibility required of the position of Conservation Agent. His knowledge, work ethic, and dedication to the agency are unsurpassed.

In addition to his regular Agent duties, Hadley wrote and submitted two *Missouri Conservationist* articles, took a very active role working with landowners to address problems with Mahan creek, worked with the Youth Conservation Corps project, wrote and had two articles published in the *Journal of Wildlife Enforcement*, completed an extensive study on spotlighting arrests in Missouri, was very active with the Oak Grove

Neighborhood Watch program, and has been instrumental in educating resource users on proper use of Department of Conservation lands.

Brad is a graduate of Drury University with an Associate's Degree in Environmental Studies and Bachelor's Degrees in Biology and Criminal Justice. He also earned a Master's Degree in Biology from Southwest Missouri State University. He is also a graduate of the Central Missouri State University's National Hunting Incident Investigation Academy and has attended several other training opportunities with the Department of Conservation.

Twin Pines Upcoming Events

June 28 Family Fishing Day

July 11 Dutch Oven Cooking

July 24-26 Ozarks Survivorman

July 30-31 Discover Nature: Families—Camp Nature

August 21 Discover Nature: Families—Insects

Call 573-325-1381 for more information

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We're on the Web!

www.missouriconservation.org

MDC Mission

- To protect and manage the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of the state.
- To serve the public and facilitate their participation in resource management activities.
- To provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about fish, forest, and wildlife resources.

Mission of this Newsletter

The mission of this newsletter is to share current information about conservation projects, issues, and program and to develop working relationships with the citizens of Shannon, Carter and Ripley Counties.

Share Your Thoughts

If there are any subjects you would like to see in the *Conservation Currents* please contact any employee listed below, or if you have any questions pertaining to the Wildlife Code please contact the Conservation Agent assigned to your county. County assignments and phone numbers are listed below.

Operation Game Thief and Operation Forest Arson

Sponsored by the Conservation Federation of Missouri, the Missouri Department of Conservation and the U.S. Forest Service.

CONTACT OFFICES AND NAMES

If you have a question about any of the following topics, here are your contact professionals

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